

Thames Valley Priorities Committee Commissioning Policy Statement

Policy No. TVPC100

Complementary and Alternative therapies

Recommendation made by
the Priorities Committee:

July 2020

Date of issue:

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Complementary and alternative therapies are treatments that fall outside of mainstream healthcare. These therapies and treatments may range from acupuncture and homeopathy, to aromatherapy, meditation and colonic irrigation. There is no universally agreed definition. When a non-mainstream practice is used together with conventional medicine, it is considered 'complementary'. When a non-mainstream practice is used instead of conventional medicine, it is considered 'alternative'.¹

Thames Valley Priorities Committee has considered the current national guidance and evidence of clinical and cost effectiveness for the use of complementary and alternative therapies. Due to the lack of robust high quality evidence of clinical and cost effectiveness compared to pharmacological and other conventional healthcare interventions, the use of complementary and alternative therapies is **not normally funded** except in the case of manual therapies for the management of low back pain and sciatica as part of a musculoskeletal treatment package and only as part of NHS back pain pathways.

NOTES:

- Potentially exceptional circumstances may be considered by a patient's CCG where there is evidence of significant health status impairment (e.g. inability to perform activities of daily living) and there is evidence that the intervention sought would improve the individual's health status.
- This policy will be reviewed in the light of new evidence or new national guidance, e.g. from NICE.
- Thames Valley clinical policies can be viewed at <http://www.fundingrequests.ccsu.nhs.uk/>

¹ <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/complementary-and-alternative-medicine/>

Appendix

Therapies encompassed by Policy Statement TVPC100: Complementary and Alternative therapies, may include the following (please note this list is not exhaustive):

- Acupuncture
- Chiropractic
- Herbal medicine
- Homeopathy
- Osteopathy
- Alexander Technique
- Pilates
- Bach and other flower remedies
- Meditation
- Shiatsu
- Yoga
- Aromatherapy
- Bodywork therapies, including massage
- Reflexology
- Healing
- Hypnotherapy
- Anthroposophical medicine
- Chinese herbal medicine
- Naturopathy
- Maharishi Ayurvedic medicine
- Eastern medicine (Tibb)
- Traditional Chinese medicine
- Crystal therapy
- Iridology
- Radionics
- Dowsing
- Kinesiology